

## Message Text

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17

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

VO-03 SCA-01 SCCT-01 SAM-01 SAJ-01 /066 W

----- 041438

R 051520Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0467

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

CONFIDENTIAL JIDDA 1590

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: CVIS, SA, PFOR

SUBJ: SAUDI VISA PROCEDURES

REF : JIDDA 1589 (NOTAL)

1. AFTER DISCUSSION MARCH 2 WITH PRINCE SULTAN, SAUDI  
MINISTER OF DEFENSE, ON SPECIFIC VISA PROBLEM (REFTEL),  
CONVERSATION TURNED TO SAUDI VISA PRACTICES IN GENERAL.

2. SULTAN SAID SAUDI AND AMERICAN VISA REGULATIONS, AS  
FAR AS HE COULD SEE, WERE VERY SIMILAR. BOTH COUNTRIES  
EXCLUDE PERSONS THEY THOUGHT COULD HARM THEIR NATIONAL  
INTERESTS. THE UNITED STATES HAD RIGID CONTROLS ON THE  
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ENTRY OF COMMUNISTS, RADICALS AND PALESTINIANS; THE SAUDIS

HAVE CONTROLS ON THE ENTRY OF COMMUNISTS, RADICALS AND ZIONISTS. IN BOTH CASES THE BARRIERS ARE PROBABLY TOO HIGH AND PERSONS ARE EXCLUDED WHO SHOULD NOT BE. IN THE AMERICAN CASE, HE ASSUMED THERE WERE FORMAL, LEGAL WAYS FOR SEEKING EXCEPTIONS; IN SAUDI ARABIA HE NOTED THERE WERE INFORMAL ONES THAT HAD WORKED VERY EFFECTIVELY THE PAST YEAR AND A HALF.

3. SULTAN SAID THAT FOR SOME TIME HE HAD THOUGHT SAUDI ARABIA SHOULD DROP FROM ITS VISA APPLICATION ALL MENTION OF RELIGION. HE ASKED IF WE KNEW IF ANY OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES REQUIRED VISA APPLICANTS TO LIST RELIGIOUS AFFILIATES. IF THERE WERE NONE IT WOULD BE EASIER FOR SAUDI ARABIA TO CHANGE. UNFORTUNATELY, THIS WOULD BE MORE DIFFICULT NOW AS IT WOULD APPEAR TO BE YIELDING TO FOREIGN (I.E. AMERICAN) PRESSURE.

4. THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT PRACTICE THE OTHER ARABS FOLLOWED, BUT HE WOULD FIND OUT; IN ANY CASE, HE KNEW THAT RELIGION WAS NO LONGER AN OBSTACLE TO ENTRY INFO MANY, IN FACT, INTO MOST ARAB STATES.

5. COMMENT: PRINCE FAHD, MINISTER OF INTERIOR, HAS ALSO REFERRED REPEATEDLY TO THIS SUBJECT. WE HAVE NO DOUBT THAT BOTH FAHD AND SULTAN WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE THE REGULATIONS. IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE TO DO SO AS LONG AS FAISAL IS KING. THE BEST WE CAN REASONABLE HOPE FOR IS THE CONTINUED AND CONSTANT BENDING OF EXISTING RULES. NONETHELESS, WE WILL CONTINUE TO PUSH (GENTLY) ON THIS POINT.

6. INFORMATION REQUESTED: WHAT OTHER ARAB STATES, IF ANY, REQUIRE VISA APPLICANT TO LIST RELIGION? DO ANY OTHER STATES HAVE ANY RESTRICTIONS ON THE ENTRY OF JEWS, PER SE?

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